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outwardly, at any rate, Rumania conformed to the Orbit pattern, although there were of course some differences in emphasis and in the methods employed to achieve the aims pursued.

Background

The period extending from early 1952 to August 1953 had been a critical period for Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Premier and Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the PMR (Partidul Muncitoresc Romin, Rumanian Workers Party) as well as his personal following. Hardly had Gheorghiu-Dej emerged victorious from his conflict with Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca, and Teohari Georgescu, who appear to have been premature Malenkovists, than he was faced with the arduous problems posed by the death of Stalin in March 1953. But although Malenkov seemed to have been the victor in the struggle for power in the USSR, and although popular discontent, demonstrated most vividly in East Germany in June 1953, was rampant in Rumania too, Gheorghiu-Dej was one of the few Satellite leaders shrewd enough to follow the Soviet pattern but to refrain from taking extreme positions.

The concessions Gheorghiu-Dej made were both political and economic. In the political field, personal leadership and hero worship were replaced by the collective leadership slogan, and in the economic field, greater emphasis on food and consumer-goods production was promised. Characteristically, the new party line was not officially formulated in Rumania until 20 August 1953; that is, only after the liquidation of Beriia, announced on 10 July. Hungarian Premier Nagy, on the other hand, had proclaimed the adoption of the new policy almost a week before that event and gone much further. Gheorghiu-Dej was the last of the Satellite bosses to fall into line.

The New Course, August 1953

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the PMR met on 19 and 20 August 1953. The official communique, as published in Scinteia of 20 August 1953, stated that the economic program submitted by Gheorghiu-Dej had been unanimously adopted, its aims being "a far-reaching and constant improvement of the city and country workers' material and cultural standards of living, by means of increased production of agricultural products and consumer goods, and development of housing and other social, health, and cultural facilities....." It further stated that a decision to improve party work and to convene the party congress in March 1954 had been adopted.

Gheorghiu-Dej elaborated on this brief announcement in his speech of 23 August, which was also printed in Scinteia. He began by confessing that, in spite of undeniable achievements, the party had been guilty of serious shortcomings in its economic policy, the correction of which must be its main task in the present phase, when the foundations of socialism were being built. The rhythm of industrialization, particularly in the field of heavy industry, had been unduly forced with the result that investments had taken too much of the national income and even exceeded the amount earmarked for the purpose in the Five-Year Plan. The slogan "The Five-Year Plan in 4 years", he said, had been launched without adequate study of resources actually available, and as a result, apportionment of the national income between investment and consumption had been incorrect and had led to an unsatisfactory rate of improvement in the standard of living. Furthermore, even the investment fund had been improperly apportioned, to the detriment of agricultural and consumer-goods production, while heavy industry and construction had been overemphasized. Gheorghiu-Dej may have had the Danube-Black Sea canal project in mind, the abandonment of which had been tacitly conceded by Deputy Foreign Minister Preoteasa according to the New York Times of 11 August 1953.

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The chief victims, Gheorghiu-Dej continued, had been the individual farmers, whose importance as purveyors of 75 percent of marketable grain had been overlooked, but state and collective farms had also been neglected. The inadequate supply of clothing, household utensils, housing, etc. was compounded by the poor organization of retail distribution. Finally, there was a serious shortage of space in schools.

To correct the imbalance, the Premier continued, it had been decided to reduce the total amounts allocated to investments over the 1953-1955 period to 27.8 percent of the national income, and to double the share going to agriculture and consumer goods, which would obtain an additional allocation of 5 billion lei. Gheorghiu-Dej then gave some concrete consumer goods production targets for 1955.

As for heavy industry, he said, the main emphasis would be put on those branches for which raw-material supplies were assured, and every effort would be made to discover new supplies.

To stimulate food production, he promised farmers easier credit terms, more machinery, better prices for produce, etc. Restrictions on kulaks were to remain in force, but acts of persecution which reduced their contributions to the supply of food were to be stopped. Workers' buying power would be raised mainly by increasing labor productivity and reducing production costs, but a "fairer" pay scale based on the relative political-economic importance of the industries would be worked out, piecework would be extended, incentive bonuses increased, etc. Housing construction would be stepped up to provide new homes for 50,000 families by 1955, and credits for private and cooperative building would be granted. Pensions would be increased, drug prices lowered, rates charged by public utilities reduced 25-30 percent, school fees reduced and new schools built, etc.

The main party task, Gheorghiu-Dej went on, was to strengthen the alliance between peasants and workers -- under the leadership of the latter. This could best be achieved by helping the peasants to produce more and to intensify trade between city and village. But the party's economic policy could not be successfully carried out unless the activities of all party, trade-union, and youth organizations, and people's councils showed a marked improvement.

The party's strength, Gheorghiu-Dej explained, was based on the fact that its policy was the right one and that all its decisions were the fruit of the collective work of its Central Committee, guided by the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin.

Lupta de Clasa, the Central Committee's political mouthpiece, developed the political features of the Plenum's decisions at greater length in an editorial appearing in its August 1953 issue. It stated that the party must learn the lesson of the Luca-Pauker-Georgescu deviation, Beriya's treason, and the intensified diversionist activities of the foreign imperialists who were endeavoring to subvert the people's democratic regime by spurring the fascist elements in the country to greater activity. Lupta de Clasa charged that the subsistence in Rumania of a large group of expropriated members of the capitalist class and of the kulaks, the most numerous of the capitalist groups, provided the native and foreign class enemies with a fertile social field for sabotage and subversion. This called for increased vigilance, security, and military forces, as well as for the strengthening of the party and the state apparatus, and the thorough weeding out of possible enemies. The careful recruitment of new and devoted party members on a strictly individual basis must be pushed. In all their activities, party organizations must respect the principles of internal democracy, collective work, and collective leadership, and all manifestations of hero worship must be done away with.

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The editorial went on to stress the duty of party organizations to supervise the branches of the state apparatus constantly, thus preventing them from becoming "states within the state," as Luca, Pauker, and Georgescu had tried to do with their departments. But they must limit themselves to supervising the state and trade-union organs and carefully refrain from substituting for them and from using administrative coercion instead of political persuasion, which, the editorial claimed, was the only leadership method approved by the party. This applied particularly to rural areas, where any attempt to coerce peasants into joining collective farms must be severely repressed. In general, all laws and regulations granting rights to workers, peasants, and employees must be scrupulously respected, all abusive treatment avoided, and their legitimate demands satisfied whenever feasible.

To strengthen party democracy and sharpen supervision, the Plenum of the Central Committee had, according to the editorial, decided to enforce strictly the party rules concerning regular meetings and elections of members of party organs and to increase the frequency of such elections.

It was of utmost importance, the editorial explained, that the "isolation from the masses" in which some party organs found themselves, be ended immediately; party ties with the masses should be greatly strengthened and, in the villages, this must be achieved by the creation of a large "nonparty aktiv" grouped around the party organization to form a link with the peasant masses. Another important objective was to strengthen party ties with intellectuals.

In its October 1955 issue, *Lupta de Clasa* revealed that the Plenum had laid particular stress on the need to gather in the near future around the leading party organs a party aktiv 80,000-100,000 strong, composed of Communists whose work was outstanding in government service, and in the economic, scientific and cultural fields, and who should be convened regularly to discuss the practical application of party decisions.

Implementation of the New Course

During the months following the announcement of the New Course, there was issued a series of decrees implementing the official promises in varying degrees. The more significant decrees provided for a reduction of the tax on wages and salaries; rent reductions; wage increases, especially for piecework; price cuts on drugs; reduction of delivery quotas on crops other than grain; easing of some financial burdens on agriculture; and incentives for livestock fattening, but more for the benefit of farming associations than of individual farmers. A million acres of state lands were turned over to landless peasants and collective farms; and new ministers of agriculture and of the food industry were appointed.

However, the party activists and newspapers, as for instance *Scinteia* of 20 December 1953, never ceased to remind the public that in the last analysis, the standard of living could only be made to rise by an increase in labor productivity and the resultant drop in prices. But it was implicitly conceded that "political" indoctrination was not sufficient and that little improvement could be expected unless the workers were granted immediate and tangible benefits for their efforts. In practice, this was achieved by the gradual shift to piecework rates, wherever possible, accompanied however by a raising of norms, with bonuses for exceeding them. This meant that workers could earn more, but had to work harder than before. On the other hand, Stakhanovism was out and was replaced in 1954 by socialist competition. A second persistent propaganda theme was the obligation of local authorities to help themselves by making full use of local resources instead of expecting the state to provide everything.

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The month of March 1954 came and went without any further mention of the Second Party Congress. Instead, the March issue of Lupta de Clasa devoted its two feature articles to eulogies of Stalin, represented as the great continuator of Marx and Lenin, the brilliant executor of the party decisions, and the victorious leader of the armies against the Hitlerite hordes. The main events in April 1954 were the trial and conviction of Lucretiu Patrascanu, a former boss of the Rumanian Communist Party, and another meeting, the third, of the Central Committee Plenum on 19 April 1954.

According to the official communique as given in Lupta de Clasa of April 1954, the meeting had examined:

1. The practical application of the decisions taken in August 1953 and the measures to be taken to fulfill the 1954 state plan and budget.
2. Gheorghiu-Dej's report on changes in the party organization. On the strength of this report, it was decided that the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the PMR should be composed of four members holding no government post, who would be in charge of current party affairs and would be guided by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee; that the position of Secretary-General of the Central Committee be abolished and that of first secretary be created instead; and that Gheorghe Apostol be elected to this position.

A number of vacancies in the Political Bureau and the Central Committee were then filled by election or cooptation.

It was further decided that the second congress of the PMR should meet on 30 October 1954.

Thus, Gheorghiu-Dej, following the example of other Satellite leaders, had relinquished his dual function as premier and party chief, but had preferred to keep the premiership. As the official line was that the purpose of divorcing the two functions was to give larger scope to the collective leadership principle, while emphasizing at the same time the supervisory role of the party and the executive role of the government, Gheorghiu-Dej had in effect nullified the party line. He remained the head of the executive, free from restraint; for no one could imagine Apostol "supervising" him.

In his report, also printed in the April 1954 issue of Lupta de Clasa, Gheorghiu-Dej had explained that Soviet and Rumanian experience had shown that if the Political Bureau and the Party Secretariat were to do their jobs properly -- the former to guide party work between meetings of the plenum, the latter to check on the carrying out of party decisions and selection of cadre -- the members of the Secretariat could not at the same time hold positions in the government. The new secretaries, Nicolae Ceausescu, Mihai Dales, and Ianos Fazekas, were therefore relieved of their portfolios in the government.

The ostensible justification for the change was, according to Gheorghiu-Dej, that the undeniable improvements in party organization and work since August 1953 were still far from adequate. The elections to all lower echelon party organs and the weeding-out process effected by means of the renewal of party cards had, it was true, strengthened the party; the village and rayon committees, important factors in the struggle for more food, had been reinforced; and agitation work was better. But much more was required.

Most regiune and subordinate committees had failed, Gheorghiu-Dej complained in his report, to enlist the collaboration of a party aktiv of 30,000-100,000 members, as recommended by the August Plenum; recruitment of new party members had been neglected; too many party organizations had pursued their bureaucratic methods and failed to take active part in political propaganda work; checking on

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the actual execution of party decisions was wholly unsatisfactory; recruitment and assignment of cadre was still poor; internal party democracy was frequently violated and hero worship still rampant. Party organizations failed in their duty to fight relentlessly "for increased labor productivity and production, full utilization of machine capacity, cost reduction, better quality; and economies of raw materials, funds, and administration expenses -- the only correct way to raise the standard of living."

Gheorghiu-Dej went on to castigate his fellow members for their remissness in organizing the large nonparty aktiv needed as a link with the peasant masses; for failing in some districts to help peasants who wanted to join collectives or associations, and in others for coercing them into joining. For this was a gross violation of the party line, which relied on educational methods to convince these peasants that by joining they would be acting in their own best interest, especially because of the recent measures increasing their share in the profits. He also charged that party members had failed to supervise trade unions and youth organizations, where leadership was often completely apathetic.

The key to the strengthening of the Rumanian People's Democracy, the Premier suggested, was close checking on the government apparatus by the party. It was for this purpose that the Political Bureau had agreed upon the necessity to propose the changes in the higher level organization of the party.

Actually, there was nothing strikingly original in this reorganization. Identical changes had been embodied, for example, in the revised Hungarian Party Statutes, as reported by Szabad Nep on 14 March 1954, but actually in force since 28 June 1952. The differences were that Gheorghiu-Dej did not deem it necessary to change the party statutes first, and that he elected to keep the premiership while Rakosi chose the party first-secretaryship. What was strikingly original in developments in Rumania was the fact that it was the only Satellite which did not hold a party congress in the spring of 1954 and gave no reason for the continued postponement of the meeting.

The prelude to the National Conference of the Central Committee of the UTM (Uniunea Tineretului Muncitoresc, Union of Working Youth), scheduled for the last week in July, was an editorial in Scinteia of 7 July 1954 in which the UTM's past achievements and leadership were reviewed and found wanting. The UTM leadership was accused of failing to maintain constantly at full pressure the socialist competition drive for increased production among youth; of failing to recruit members, especially in the villages and among girls; of failing to cultivate among pupils and students the spirit of love for learning; of not furthering political-ideological education; and of not fighting the influence of bourgeois ideology. UTM leadership was further indicted for violation of the collective leadership principle and for working bureaucratically. According to Scinteia of 1 August 1954, the delegates to the conference duly confirmed Scinteia's strictures by their self-criticisms and followed them up by electing an almost entirely new central committee and secretariat.

Economic Policies, August 1954

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the PMR met again on 2 August 1954. The official communique, as given in the August 1954 issue of Letta de Clasa, stated that the Plenum had approved the following agenda for the Second Party Congress, which was to convene on 30 October 1954: reports on the activities of the Central Committee and of the Commission of Review of the PMR, directives of the Second Party Congress concerning the expansion of agriculture in the next 2-3 years; report on the revision of the party statutes; and election of the Central Committee and of the Commission of Review.

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The communique added that the draft of the revised party statutes, of the agricultural directives, and of the rules which would govern representation at the party congress had been approved.

The changes in the party statutes, which were also printed by Lupta de Clasa for August 1954, were mainly intended to tighten party discipline and to ensure a more active but also more careful recruitment of new members, more frequent elections to and meetings of lower level party organizations, the creation of Communist Party "groups" in all mass organizations, even temporary organizations such as congresses and conferences, and the formal subordination of the UTM and the Higher Political Directorate of the Army to the party Central Committee.

The Second Party Congress Agricultural Directives for the next 2-3 years, which appeared in the September 1954 issue of Lupta de Clasa, and the figures on plan fulfillment for the first half-year of 1954 were summarized by Gheorghiu-Dej on 22 August 1954, in his traditional survey of the situation. He began, according to Lupta de Clasa of September 1954, with the ritual claim that progress toward the building of the economic foundation of socialism was satisfactory, as the socialist sector in all branches of the economy was steadily growing at the expense of the other two, the private-capitalist and the small-scale goods production sectors. Industry was 99 percent socialized and industrial output was 150 percent larger than in 1949. In the period 1949-1953, output of means of production had accounted for the largest gains, but in 1954, the rate of growth of the consumer goods production index was greater than the rate for means of production, and would continue to be the greater in 1955. However, heavy industry had also continued to make headway, but at an unforced rate of growth.

Labor productivity had risen by 38 percent since 1950, Gheorghiu-Dej reported, as a result of increased mechanization of industry. Of great import was the fact that thousands of industrial executives and tens of thousands of technicians and skilled workers had been trained. Socialization of agriculture had also made progress.

Increased investments and stronger financial incentives for peasants to produce salable surpluses and to increase livestock production should ensure success on the agricultural front, according to Gheorghiu-Dej. He also reported that retail trade had been considerably expanded, as had trade with the USSR and the People's Democracies.

The national income, Gheorghiu-Dej stated, had doubled between 1948 and 1953, three quarters of the 1953 total being produced by the socialist sector. "I repeat," Gheorghiu-Dej continued, "that, as stated by the 1953 Plenum, the rhythm of investment in industry had been forced. It decreed a reduction in the share of the national income allotted to investments, and their more rational allocation among the various branches of the economy, a large portion going into agriculture." However, he continued, the country was now going to harvest the fruits of earlier industrial investments. The number of industrial workers was twice as large as in 1949 and their income had risen by 15 percent since 1953. There still existed shortages of consumer goods, but the necessary steps to fill the gaps would be taken.

Gheorghiu-Dej urged that preparations for the Second Party Congress be marked by improvement and intensification of party organization work, a higher level of Communist sense of responsibility, a more pronounced leadership spirit in party organizations, and closer ties between them and the broad masses of the population.

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The agricultural directives for the next 2-3 years went into great detail with regard to targets and the methods to achieve them, including the duties of all concerned; agricultural techniques were discussed.

According to the directives, the area sown to corn was to be increased to 3.3 million hectares in 1955 and to 3.4 million hectares in 1956; the area sown to fall wheat, to 2,740,000 hectares in 1956. Average per-hectare production of wheat was to reach 1,400 kilograms and of corn, 1,500 kilograms. This re-turn to favor of corn, the traditional Rumanian staple up to the Communist seizure of power, coincided with the rise to power of Khrushchev, the Soviet champion of corn.

The directive ordered the MTS to change their attitude of indifference toward individual farmers, whom they were to help in every way. Moreover, individual farmers were no longer to be obliged to farm according to an official plan, but were merely to be told every year the amount of grain they were expected to deliver to the state. The authorities were to make loans to individual farmers owning to livestock, to enable them to acquire some animals. The farm tractor pool was to be increased, and mechanization of farm work was to be considerably extended by 1956. The Central Cooperative Organization was to set up in every commune a pool of animal-drawn machines available for hire by individual peasants.

As the present system of payment in kind for MTS work did not stimulate collective or individual farmers to mechanize operations and to increase per-hectare yield, the directives suggested that the system be changed to payment at a flat rate per hectare according to location, kind of crop, and type of work, with bonuses for high yields. The technical MTS personnel was to be encouraged by a system of bonuses to stay on the job for long service.

Operation of state farms was to be considerably improved on lines carefully mapped out by the directives. Among other things, labor productivity should be higher. Collective farms and farming associations, the directives showed, were far from utilizing to full advantage their vast possibilities to increase production, to raise the income of members, and thus increase their attractiveness to prospective members. This situation was to be corrected and their organizational and economic structure reinforced. The directive urged state and party organizations to convince more peasants to join farming associations and to form simple temporary partnerships for the growing of specific crops. Significantly, collective farms were not mentioned in this connection.

But the directives urged that collective farmers be stimulated by additional bonuses in cash and in kind to produce in excess of plan. On the other hand, it was recommended that the minimum number of workdays required from members employed in some specialized branches be raised.

The directives promised that a "Bank for Agriculture" (Banca Agricola), specializing in farm loans, would open its doors on 1 January 1955. To encourage individual farmers to greater efforts, the directives indicated that the wool and milk collection system and contracting for deliveries of fat livestock must be made more attractive. Farm taxes were to be levied in future at a flat rate per hectare, and not, as was then the practice, vary according to income.

The directives also urged increased training and research in agriculture.

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Further Postponement of the Party Congress

October 1954 brought, instead of the promised party congress, an official announcement in the newspapers of the 28th of its indefinite postponement by decision of the Central Committee of the PMR "at the request of some party organizations" in order to allow those organizations to devote themselves fully to the urgent tasks of full sowing and collection of produce.

In its editorial, the October 1954 issue of Lupta de Clasa referred to the congress as an event in the distant future and called for a marked improvement in party teaching in the meantime. Lecturers and propagandists were accused of excessive dogmatism, that is, failure to link the theory and practice of Marxism closely enough, and of drawing forced or unfounded parallels between events in Rumania and the USSR. The editorial also accused them of failing to study Lenin's theory of the NEP -- which was the current period in the development of socialism in Rumania -- and of failing to grasp the scientific foundation of the August 1953 Plenum's finding that, in this phase, improvement of agriculture was the main task, concomitant of course with the unforced development of heavy industry and the rapid increase in consumer goods output. A main reason, the editorial continued, for the general failure to appreciate the "creative" character of Marxism and Leninism was the absence from the party curriculum of a subject as important as the history of the PMR a gap which would be filled henceforth.

Lupta de Clasa further urged that party lecturers combat the unfounded belief that state assistance to individual farmers made it more difficult to get them to join collective farms. On the contrary, it said, the more they could earn by selling their surpluses to the state, the more they benefited from modern farming techniques, the closer the alliance between peasants and workers would become, and the more they would be attracted to socialist forms of agriculture.

Finally, the editorial urged lecturers to combat with much greater vigor hero worship, as well as all the still surviving manifestations of nationalism, chauvinism, cosmopolitanism, capitalism, and bourgeois idealism.

The editorial's main interest lies perhaps in its emphasis on the "creative" nature of Marxism-Leninism, i.e., its adaptability to varying historic and geographic circumstances, in the emphasis on the differences between conditions in Rumania and the USSR, and on the need to study the hitherto neglected history of the Rumanian Communist Party.

On 25 September 1954, the USSR agreed to the liquidation of 12 Sovroms, which left only two -- Sovrompetrol and Sovromquartz (uranium), which happened to be the most valuable. On the other hand, Gheorghiu-Dej declared, according to Scinteia of 6 November 1954, "that the comradesly coordination of state plans... represents a new and higher level achieved by the brotherly economic collaboration of the socialist camp. Starting from the thorough knowledge of each democratic country's resources, it takes into account the need to develop the national resources of each country in the interest of the entire camp."

Speculation on the subject of which one of the Rumanian Communist leaders enjoyed Moscow's favor was set at rest -- for the time being, at any rate -- by the speech of Soviet Ambassador Melnikov on the occasion of the celebration of the October Revolution anniversary. He ascribed the successes achieved by Rumania to the correct leadership of the PMR and the government "headed by Comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej."

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Three developments during the summer and fall of 1954 may be worth mentioning for their possible inner political significance: A number of general officers of the Royal Rumanian Army, including early supporters of the Communist regime, who had lost favor, participated publicly in the 23 August 1954 celebration, and names of non-Communist intellectuals and politicians began to appear under peace appeals and denunciations of West German rearmament. On the other hand former Finance Minister Vasile Luca, one of the Luca-Pauker-Georgescu trio purged in March 1952, was unexpectedly brought to trial and sentenced in October 1954.

Abolition of Rationing, December 1954

On 25 December 1954, the regime kept the promise made on 23 August 1953 to abolish rationing in 1954. The official announcement, appearing in all Bucharest newspapers of 27 December 1954, explained that in spite of unfavorable weather for some fall field crops, the total harvest had totaled over 9 million tons and thus exceeded the 1953 crops, chiefly as a result of larger corn planting. The 40-percent increase in agricultural investments and 27-percent increase in light-industry investments in 1954 over 1953 had borne fruit, and crop and consumer-goods production prospects for 1955 were very good. However, the announcement said, it was realized that, in spite of official price reductions of some articles, of which corn meal was the most important, the increased prices on other goods and the fact that workers would henceforth have to pay the official prices prevailing in socialist trade, which were considerably higher than those for hitherto rationed articles, would raise the cost of living considerably. Therefore, a sliding scale of monthly "compensations" was granted to former cardholders.

The decision implicitly admitted that, actually, abandonment of rationing could only create the necessary preconditions for increased production, on which would depend a drop in prices and a higher standard of living. For it devoted considerable space to a ringing appeal to all workers to raise their levels of productivity, to those in authority to improve management, to both to improve quality and to reduce costs, to trade channels to ensure proper distribution, and to all party members and organs, all trade unions, and all youth organizations to intensify their agitational activities and the promotion of socialist competitions. As for the agricultural sector, there was no appeal to the peasants to work more or better; rather, party and state organs were urged to do everything they could to increase the peasants' material interest in the production of larger crops and more meat. The start was made by the government itself in the issuance of a decree, announced in Scinteia of 8 January 1955, designed to make contracts for future delivery of livestock, poultry, and animal products more advantageous to the producer. The decree raised prices, reduced grain deliveries, made low-interest loans available, etc. However, the prices paid to socialized farms were higher than those paid to individual farmers.

Indoctrination and Political Guidance by the Party, 1954-1955

The year 1954 witnessed the initiation of a campaign against dishonesty in socialist trade and enterprises, which had apparently reached intolerable proportions. The convictions of employees received wide publicity in newspapers, which began to run a special column for the purpose.

Study of the Russian language was actively pushed in 1954. Contemporarul of 24 September 1954 revealed that 215,000 people had registered for Russian language courses in the 1953-1954 school year and announced that, henceforth, the three existing grades would be supplemented by advanced courses. On the other hand, indications were not lacking in the press that registration and attendance, not to mention progress, were by no means synonymous.

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Elections of lower level party organization bureaus, which were to be held every year by decision of the August 1953 Plenum of the Central Committee, took place in February and March 1955. Their significance was stressed in a Lupta de Clasa editorial in the February 1955 issue. For the first time in almost 2 years, development of heavy industry was listed in first place among party tasks, with agriculture second and consumer goods third. As Lupta de Clasa appears at the end of the month, the fact that Malenkov had resigned on 8 February and Khrushchev had emerged as the most collective among the collective Soviet leaders, was hardly a coincidence.

The editorial went on to explain that party work was not an end in itself, and that the level of leadership was always rated according to results achieved by enterprises, collective farms, etc. The annual reports and elections of organization officers, it said, must be looked upon as opportunities to examine the record of each party member in the struggle to increase the part played by each organization in raising output and real productivity, in strengthening work discipline, in the discovery of new internal reserves, in economizing on raw materials and fuel, in reducing costs and improving quality, and in improving political work to mobilize the peasant masses to produce an abundant harvest. Unsatisfactory conditions in retail and cooperative trade, as well as indifference toward the infiltration of dishonest elements into trade enterprises, were also to be examined with a critical eye. The problem of improving the methods of running state agencies and economic enterprises, as well as of selecting and assigning the right cadre to the right places, must never be lost sight of, said the editorial, if bureaucratism, formalism, and routine were to be eradicated.

A great deal of attention was devoted to youth problems during the winter months. Both the Central Committee of the UPM and a series of National Teachers Conferences embracing the entire field from kindergarten to university education, met in Bucharest from 6 January to 8 February 1955 to discuss such problems. This time, the Ministry of Education had to bear the main burden of criticism. The keynote was struck by the minister himself who wrote in a vein of self-criticism in Scinteia of 19 January 1955: "A great part of the shortcomings manifest in the teaching and educational work of the schools are due to faulty activities on the part of the ministry" Unsatisfactory conditions in institutes of higher education were singled out for criticism by Lupta de Clasa of February 1955.

The Central Committee of the UPM was mainly preoccupied with the mobilization of youth for the spring sowing campaign and the application of a decree issued on 29 January 1955, published in all Bucharest newspapers of that date, for the radical reorganization of lower and intermediate technical schools, the system applied so far having failed to produce the skilled labor needed. An attempt to stem the spread of juvenile delinquency by legislative action was made by the promulgation of a decree, announced in Romania Libera of 15 March 1955, making hooliganism a penal offense. The Cluj newspaper Pacila of 27 January 1955, as quoted by Cronica Romaneasca of March-April 1955, openly admitted that the official promise to stamp out illiteracy in Rumania before the end of 1954 had not been kept, as numerous illiterates were still to be found in many villages, a fact established by the 19 September 1954 census (no official communique showing the results of the census has been published).

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Economic Policies, Spring 1955

The spotlight was soon again focused on economics -- closely following the pattern set by the USSR under the influence of Khrushchev.

According to Scinteia of 3 February and 1 March 1955, the inducements to livestock breeders were extended to growers of industrial crops, vegetables, and fruit. A conference of leading agricultural workers was convened in Bucharest 27 February-3 March and addressed by Gheorghiu-Dej, according to Scinteia of 3 March 1955. He began by acknowledging the primacy of heavy industry, the purveyor of agricultural machinery, and went on to claim that the agricultural policy of the regime had borne fruit. Investments in agriculture had been increased to 1.8 billion lei in 1954 and would reach 2.8 billion in 1955. Greater emphasis had been laid on the production of animal-drawn farm machinery, better suited to fill the needs of individual farmers. A total of 3,800 farm machine centers had been set up in conjunction with village cooperatives, from whom machines could be rented by peasants who could not afford to buy them. The newly erected Agricultural Bank would triple the amount of credit available to peasants in 1955 over the preceding year. More land had been fall-plowed and sown than in any year, and harvest prospects were very good. It should be possible, Gheorghiu-Dej said, to reach the goal of 10 million tons of grain set for 1955, especially if the area sown to corn were increased and higher yields obtained. It was the Ministry of Agriculture, he charged, which, following the bad advice of some specialists, had been responsible for the curtailment of corn production since 1948. In 1955, he said, the area sown to corn must be increased to 3.3 million hectares, to provide sufficient corn for human consumption and fattening of livestock, as well as for export.

But to obtain a good harvest, Gheorghiu-Dej continued, everyone must do his bit, starting with the Ministry of Agriculture, which must send its specialists into the field, not into offices. People's councils must persuade the greatest possible number of peasants to form partnerships and to pool their equipment and draft animals for the season. The good results achieved by the party organizations in the 1954 fall harvesting and sowing campaign showed what could be done.

On 23 April 1955, the regime felt economic conditions had given sufficient signs of improvement to justify a modest reduction of prices. The announcement in all Bucharest newspapers of 24 April 1955, coinciding with similar announcements in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Bulgaria, asserted that "the abolition of rationing had stimulated the rise in industrial and agricultural production. The greater volume of sales of goods in socialist trade and the growing amount of agricultural produce brought to market by the peasants has considerably improved supplies available to both the city and the village population. Food prices have dropped, contrary to the usual February-April trend when food was scarce"

The decree mainly affected prices of edible pastes and canned food (which were reduced 15-25 percent), clothing (6-30 percent), household appliances (10 percent), and kerosene (7 percent).

The spring sowing campaign being well under way, the fire of the heavy party guns was concentrated once more on the heavy-industry front. Lupta de Clasa of May 1955 carried an article under the title "Heavy Industry, the Basis of Development of the Entire National Economy," in which the New Course was described as "a certain slowdown in the pace of heavy-industry expansion in 1954, dictated by the need to re-establish a right proportion in the development of the economy, but which was only temporary, inasmuch as heavy industry kept its priority position. Total production of socialist industry had registered a 92.6-percent increase from 1950 to 1954, but actually, output of means of production had increased 101.4 percent, and output of consumer goods, only 82.1 percent."

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Discussion of Party Membership Composition

Two successive editorials of Lupta de Clasa discussed the party's social composition. In the periodical's August 1955 issue, it was asserted that the degree of "democratization" of a country was determined by the class which wielded political power, that in a People's Democracy, this power was in the hands of the overwhelming majority of the population, the village and city workers. No capitalist country, said the editorial, could boast of a parliamentary representation as democratic as that of the Rumanian People's Republic, where the Grand National Assembly, the sole holder of the legislative power, was composed of 196 workers, 142 peasants and 57 intellectuals.

This was actually an admission that, even in theory, power was not in the hands of the peasants. The editorial stated that the peasants were represented in the Grand National Assembly by 142 deputies, according to the Rumanian Constitution of 1954, 94.8 percent of the total population, was represented by 132 deputies, and the remaining 65.2 percent by 132 deputies. The admission was fully confirmed in the September 1955 editorial of Lupta de Clasa, which recalled a party decision of July 1950 stipulating that 85 percent of the party must belong to the factory worker class, and the August editorial was clearly stated that this was the class which wielded the political power in a People's Democracy.

Economic Conditions, August 1955

On 22 August 1955, Gheorghiu-Dej made his annual report to the nation in the presence of N. S. Khrushchev, who was paying his second visit to Bucharest within 3 months. As usual, the speech was packed with statistics. Laying particular stress on the fact that almost 90 percent of all economic and social-cultural investment funds had been allocated to heavy industry, he pointed with pride to the country's achievement toward fulfillment of the Five-Year Plan in various industries, including the electric power, machine-building, chemical, construction-materials, and petroleum industries. On the other hand, the steel and coal industries, and, particularly enough, the construction-materials industry, he said, had lagged somewhat. As for the building industry, Gheorghiu-Dej was frankly critical of its slowing and called for a radical change. Labor productivity in industry had, it was true, increased 40 percent, but that was not commensurate with the amount of new and efficient machinery supplied to industry. Neither had production costs dropped as much as they should. This was important as one could not even think of reducing prices and raising standards of living under the circumstances.

Gheorghiu-Dej was very satisfied with the progress made by agriculture. There were now 5,600 collective farms and Farming associations, with a membership of 360,000 families, and 2,700 simple cooperatives; 26 percent of arable land was now in the socialist sector of agriculture. The goal of 9,040,000 tons of grain, set for 1955, had already been exceeded in 1954. A 100-percent increase in consumer goods available to the people through village cooperatives was achieved. The 1955 wheat harvest had been good, and the corn, potato, and beet harvests promised to be very good.

The good harvests, especially of corn, and the inducements offered to the peasants had brought about, according to Gheorghiu-Dej, increased availability of food products for the urban population. However, there were still bottlenecks to be broken in the spinning and textile-finishing departments.

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Much of the economic improvement, according to Gheorghiu-Dej, was due to the abolition of rationing, and he went on to claim great advances in education, cultural facilities, health, arts, and sciences.

On the other hand, the Premier called for further improvement of the governmental apparatus, which must be watched, he said, "to make sure it follows the party and government line unwaveringly, serves the workers' interests devotedly, and is on its guard against the enemies of the people and of the regime."

The work of people's councils had improved, Gheorghiu-Dej asserted, but they could and should do more to develop local resources. Party organs should raise the level of their political-economic activities and of their social competition. They should exert closer control over trade unions and urge them on to more active socialist competition and to emulation of star workers.

Conspicuous by its absence in Gheorghiu-Dej's 23 August 1955 speech was any mention of the 30,000-100,000 strong party aktiv which he had so insistently demanded 2 years previously. He also dealt lightly with a number of topics, which, judging by the space they occupied in the press, seemed to cost the party leadership considerable worry. They included widespread failure to utilize or to properly maintain the expensive mechanical equipment, much of it imported, with which the various industries had been endowed; reluctance to adopt advanced techniques; sacrifice of quality to quantity; supplying false statistics; inefficient or inept merchandising; and the drive launched in Oradea Stalin industries in early July to earn socialist "accumulations" (i.e., profits) in excess of the planned amounts.

Gheorghiu-Dej concluded his speech by observing that from 1950 to 1955, Rumania's foreign trade had increased 80.8 percent. Trade within the Orbit had grown, but trade with non-Orbit countries had increased more -- over 150 percent. It would have grown even more if the "well-known unfavorable conditions" had been removed.

Gheorghiu-Dej also seemed very much interested in the expansion of cultural exchanges and international travel, which would be greatly helped by an improved international atmosphere. Even so, he was glad to say that Rumania's efforts in that direction had been rewarded and that the country had been visited by 13,000 foreigners since the beginning of the year.

The Warsaw Conference (11-17 May 1955), which ended with the agreement to create a unified command, including the USSR and the European Satellites, was addressed by Gheorghiu-Dej on 19 May. A great part of the speech, as reported in *Scintila* of 13 May 1955, was taken up by an attack on refugees, whom he said the US intended to use as tools to effect the so-called liberation of the People's Democracies. Apparently in an effort to blunt that tool, a decree promising amnesty to all refugees returning to Rumania within a specified period was issued on 26 June 1955, according to all Bucharest newspapers.

On 12 August 1955, the Bucharest papers published Gheorghiu-Dej's reply to A. L. Bradford of the United Press, who had inquired whether it was true the Soviet troops would withdraw from Rumania by 1 October, now that Austria had been evacuated. Gheorghiu-Dej recalled that the Soviet troops were in Rumania in accordance with the peace treaty to ensure the security of communications of Soviet troops in Austria. Notwithstanding the signing of the peace treaty with Austria, the important changes that had occurred in Europe recently had to be taken into account. In the West, military groupings and bases had been created, and West Germany had been rearmamentized. This had led to the conclusion of the Warsaw Treaty to ensure the security of the People's Democracies. But if the foreign troops were withdrawn from the Western countries and the Western military

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Groupings were dissolved, the European situation would be different and the Treaty of Warsaw would no longer be needed. In this case, said Gheorghiu-Dej, the need for Soviet troops in Rumania would disappear and they would be withdrawn.

Reduction of the Rumanian Army strength by 40,000 men by 1 December, described as an earnest manifestation of the country's desire to contribute to the relaxation of international tension as a result of the Geneva "Summit" Conference, was announced in all Bucharest newspapers on 30 August 1955. This was followed by the decision to reduce the duration of military service of conscripts.

British Film Week, 25 September-1 October, and Rumanian-French Friendship Days, 18-30 November 1955, were also presumably manifestations of the 'Geneva spirit'.

Preparations for Party Congress, Fall 1955

Following a meeting of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the PMR on 30 September and 1 October, important decisions were announced in the newspapers of 2 October 1955.

The Second Congress of the PMR was to be convened on 23 December. The agenda was unchanged except for the substitution of directives for the Second Five-Year Plan for the directives for the development of agriculture.

Gheorghiu-Dej was elected First Secretary of the Central Committee of the PMR, and I. Chisinevski, Secretary. Gheorghe Apostol, the outgoing First Secretary, was elected President of Trade Unions.

The Grand National Assembly, meeting on 3 October, accepted the resignation of Gheorghiu-Dej as Premier and approved Chivu Stoica as his successor.

Following the example set by the USSR in February 1955, a number of ministers were elected First Vice-Presidents (four) and Vice-Presidents (three) of the Council of Ministers. Their places in the cabinet being filled by other party notables, including one former Social Democrat, Stefan Voitec, who had been ousted from the position of Party Secretary in the 1952 Pauker-Luca purge.

Gheorghiu-Dej himself, in his letter of resignation as Premier, modestly declared his motive to be the fact that the governmental apparatus had acquired sufficient experience to function satisfactorily, while party leadership needed to be strengthened in order to enhance the party's dominant role in the state. *Scinteia* of 5 October 1955, commenting editorially on the permutation, failed to represent it as a move to implement the collective leadership principle. Rather was it described as "the elevation to a higher level of the guiding political role of the party in the trade unions" and the endowment of the party "with even stronger weapons for the fulfillment of [its] tasks." In other words, considering the impregnable position of Gheorghiu-Dej as long as he remained Moscow's anointed, the tail had been supplied with a stronger dog.

The new Premier, Chivu Stoica, gave a succinct statement of the party line in his acceptance speech before the Grand National Assembly. He said, according to *Scinteia* of 4 October 1955, "... the government will continue to pay special attention to the development of heavy industry and, at the same time, to a constant increase in production of mass consumer goods and in constructions of economic and social-cultural nature. We must make increasing efforts to extend new techniques, ... to increase the productivity of labor, ... to reduce costs in industry. The party will work ceaselessly for the strictest reconstruction of agriculture, the only road to plenty and well-being, the road of ... consolidation of collective farms and agricultural associations, of support to the peasant in the organization of new partnerships for the joint tilling of land and of collective farms. At the same time, the party and the government will

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support the individual working peasants by giving them financial inducement to increase vegetable and animal production. An important factor in the consolidation of our economy is the expansion of socialist state and cooperative trade in town and country and stimulation of exchanges between towns and villages.

Some additional figures on Rumania's economic situation were supplied by Miron Constantinescu, one of the First Vice-Presidents of the Council of Ministers, in a speech delivered on 6 November 1955 and reported in all Bucharest newspapers of 8 November. He announced that the Five-Year Plan in industry had been 99 percent fulfilled by 21 October 1955 and that production had reached a level 2.9 times that of 1938; the goal set for agriculture had been considerably exceeded, over 11 million tons of grain having been harvested.

The national income of Rumania had doubled since 1938.

Agerpres, the official Rumanian news agency, announced on 2 December 1955 that available food supplies had risen 120 percent and consumer goods 81 percent since 1950, and that the number of state retail trade outlets had grown in the same interval from 7,490 to 25,184 units.

On 4 December 1955, Rominia Libera announced that, since the Five-Year Plan had been fulfilled by early November and since the budgets of economic enterprises were showing surpluses, the recent (16-percent) reduction in the price of corn meal was to be followed, as of 5 December, by price reductions of 10-24 percent on woolen clothing, furniture, kerosene, soap, lignite, and a number of minor articles such as watches and cameras.

Summary

A comparison of Rumanian production figures for 1938, of target figures for 1955 as revised in August 1953, and of actual achievements claimed in 1955, as compiled from Scinteia of 3 and 8 November 1955, is as follows:

	1938 Production	1955 Targets (as revised Aug 53)	1955 Production (claimed)
Crude oil	6,600,000 tons	11,000,000 tons	10,500,000 tons
Coal	2,800,000 tons	8,500,000 tons	6,300,000 tons
Steel	284,000 tons	1,000,000 tons	785,000 tons
Cotton fabrics	104,000,000 sq m	250,000,000 sq m	245,000,000 sq m
Woolen fabrics	12,300,000 sq m	32,500,000 sq m	31,000,000 sq m
Shoes, leather and rubber	--	14,000,000 pairs	17,000,000 pairs
Grain	4,400,000 tons*	9,040,000 tons**	11,000,000 tons
Meat	3,300,000 tons	--	400,000 tons
Sugar	95,000 tons	--	132,000 tons
Socialist trade turnover		26 billion lei	25 billion lei

* 1949-1953 average

** Five-Year Plan target

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The above figures show that heavy industry failed to reach the targets set under the 1953 New Course, but that, on the whole, the consumer goods industry and agriculture achieved, and in some cases even surpassed, their goals. The best showing was made by agriculture, partly no doubt as a consequence of increased assistance to individual peasants and greater price incentives, but chiefly as a consequence of the favorable weather conditions for corn cultivation.

Farm collectivization made little progress. The number of collective farms and farm associations increased from 3,066 with a membership of 280,000 families on 31 December 1952 (*Probleme Economice*, May-June 1953) to 5,000 with a membership of 360,000 families (Gheorghiu-Dej in *Scintila*, 25 August 1955). However, the area of socialized arable land, including state farms, registered an increase of barely 2 percent, from 24 percent of total arable land in early 1953 (*Pentru o Pace Trainica, Pentru o Democratia Populara*, 29 May 1953) to 26 percent in 1955 (*Scintila*, 8 November 1955). A possible and partial explanation may be found in the decision to transfer part of the state farm lands to collectives farms and individual peasants, announced in the fall of 1953.

The policy of furnishing substantial state assistance to individual peasants, but without going so far as to allow peasants to leave collective farms, as in Hungary, constitutes perhaps the greatest originality of the Rumanian Communist Party line -- probably for the reason that in the absence of individual peasants in the USSR, the Satellites enjoyed greater freedom of action in this field. However, as appears from statements reproduced above, approval of the policy, in spite of immediate favorable results, was far from unanimous in the higher party ranks, the opposition being reputedly led by Chisinevski.

Outwardly, however, the most striking originality of the Rumanian Communists lay in their failure to hold a party congress in 1954 or the first 51 weeks of 1955. Various explanations have been sought for the repeated postponements. None of them was convincing, but the reason may have been very simple: The whole point of a party congress is to provide a spectacular setting for an orgy of "pointing with pride." Any urgent decisions, including personnel decisions, can be taken, and are taken, by the party central committee, in Bucharest or in Moscow. For this reason, Gheorghiu-Dej saw no reason to be stampeded into holding the congress as long as conditions were so bad as to discourage any attempt at embellishment; and from all reports, it appears that the standard of living in Rumania, except in regard to housing, did improve noticeably in 1954 and 1955. ~~Why?~~ they are even today may be judged from the fact that the price of a first quality wool suit (about 900 lei) is twice the average monthly wages (400-500 lei), while the prewar ratio was roughly the same as in the US. Why this should be so when output in all fields, including textiles, is claimed to be so much greater, has never been explained, but the fact remains that conditions, especially with regard to food supplies, were considerably better in 1955 than in any year since 1948.

In all other respects, the line of the Rumanian Communist Party seems to have closely followed the Moscow line and that of the other Satellites. Gheorghiu-Dej appears, however, to have sensed somewhat more closely than other Communist leaders that heavy industry was merely suffering a temporary eclipse in 1953 and restored it promptly to first place in the party line.

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Indeed, it may well be that the New Course in Rumania, inaugurated with such a fanfare in August 1953, actually did not imply any curtailment of funds allocated to the development of heavy industry. The additional allocations to the consumer goods industries and agriculture represented simply the amount originally budgeted for the Danube-Black Sea canal, work on which was being discontinued.

By choosing the position of head of the government rather than that of party leader up to October 1955, Gheorghiu-Dej also showed a certain degree of originality; likewise, by the simple fact that he retained the No 1 position without apparent difficulty.

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